

## Caffeine FAQs

According to the University of Illinois at Urbana, 9 out of 10 Americans consume caffeine in one form or another every day. More than half of all American adults consume more than 300 milligrams (mg) of caffeine each day, making it America's most popular drug by far. Caffeine is in all the usual suspects (coffee, tea, and cola) as well as in chocolate, other soft drinks (including some orange sodas and root beers), and "energy" drinks. It's also in some over-the-counter drugs, including some headache, cold, and allergy remedies. The amount of caffeine in coffee and tea varies widely, depending on whether they're brewed or instant, weak or strong. Caffeine is a mild stimulant to the central nervous system. Though it's not addictive, it can be habit forming. When caffeine intake is stopped abruptly, some individuals experience headache, fatigue or drowsiness. Moreover, age, body size, and regular usage can make a significant difference on the intensity of its individual effects.

### **HOW MUCH CAFFEINE IS "SAFE?"**

Moderation is the key. Most experts agree that 300 mg of caffeine (about the amount contained in 3 cups—18oz—of coffee) is a moderate intake. People who have certain health problems need to check with their doctor as they consider their caffeine intake. There is currently no evidence that caffeine intake is associated with heart disease, hypertension, osteoporosis or high cholesterol. Though, because research is ongoing, recommendations about caffeine in the presence of these conditions is conflicting. Talk with your doctor for guidance about your consumption. Some people are more sensitive to caffeine's effects than others and may feel effects at smaller doses. Pregnancy and aging may also affect one's sensitivity to caffeine. There is no evidence that caffeine in beverage form is dehydrating. Its diuretic effects are usually compensated for by the beverage's fluid content. If you ingest caffeine from sports supplements or from prescription drugs or over-the-counter sources be sure to drink adequate fluid to rehydrate yourself from caffeine's mild diuretic action.

### **WILL CAFFEINE HELP ME STAY AWAKE?**

Caffeine may help you stay awake and be alert for duty, but it will not improve your performance in a complex mission or an exam the next day if you have not gotten enough rest or are exhausted from an all-night study session. According to the Coast Guard's Research and Development Center, there is strong evidence that sleeping for 4-5 hours may allow physical restoration (the body gets its needed rest) but does not allow cognitive restoration (the brain does not function optimally). It is during a person's uninterrupted sleep in hours 6 and 7 that the majority of REM (rapid eye movement) sleep happens, where the optimal brain chemistry that supports cognitive functioning occurs.

### **HOW CAN I ENERGIZE?**

Instead of reaching for another Coke or a cup of coffee, try these non-caffeinated strategies to maintain good energy levels:

- Get a good night's sleep. If you are tired during the day, take a short nap.

- Take a brisk, 10-minute walk.
- Eat regular, healthful meals. Use the food guide pyramid to build your meals. Fatty foods and alcohol can make you feel "draggy."
- Try not to skip or delay meals. Avoid eating very large meals - digesting a large meal can make you want a nap.

### **I GET MY CAFFEINE FROM COFFEE AND NO-DOZ - AND I WOULD LIKE TO LOSE WEIGHT. IS IT SAFE TO TAKE AN HERBAL SUPPLEMENT TO HELP ME LOSE WEIGHT OR TO STAY AWAKE?**

Herbal supplements for weight loss often contain high levels of caffeine and/or guarana or ephedra (ma huang) - other nervous system stimulants. Using weight loss supplements containing ephedra has been associated with illness and death. For additional ephedra information visit this URL: <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/ds-ephed.html>. Taking diet supplements containing these ingredients, and maintaining your usual caffeine intake can push you past the recommended moderate level of 300 mg/day caffeine intake per day. Herbal stimulants can be very dangerous. If your caffeine comes from pills vs. drinks, be sure to keep your fluid intake high to address the moderate dehydrating effects of caffeine.

### **HOW CAN I QUIT OR REDUCE MY CAFFEINE CONSUMPTION?**

- Cut back gradually. Eliminate a cup or glassful a day rather than going "cold turkey."
- Keep a log to see how much caffeine you consume. Remember to count medications and supplements. Experiment with your intake to see how you feel both physically and psychologically
- Limit your intake to 200-300 mg of caffeine per day.
- Substitute herbal tea, hot or cider or decaf coffee for caffeinated drinks.
- Be active or be still - run, walk, bike ride, swim, do yoga or meditate.
- Eat regular meals and stop smoking – meals, caffeine and cigarettes often go together.

### **HOW MUCH CAFFEINE IS IN MY FAVORITE FOODS AND BEVERAGES?**

Item	Amount	Caffeine
Brewed coffee, drip method	8 ounces	100-300 mg
Brewed coffee, percolated	8 ounces	65-275 mg
Instant coffee	8 ounces	50-190 mg
Espresso	2 ounces	40-70 mg
Cappuccino	2 ounces	40-70 mg
Decaffeinated coffee	8 ounces	1-8 mg
Brewed tea	8 ounces	35-175 mg

<b>Green tea</b>	8 ounces	8-30 mg
<b>Instant tea</b>	8 ounces	40-80 mg
<b>Iced tea</b>	12 ounces	65-75 mg
<b>Coffee ice cream or frozen yogurt</b>	1 cup	8-85 mg
<b>Soft drinks</b>	12-ounce can	30-60 mg
<b>Hot cocoa</b>	8 ounces	3-30 mg
<b>Chocolate milk</b>	8 ounces	2-7 mg
<b>Milk chocolate</b>	1 ounce	1-15 mg
<b>Dark or semisweet chocolate</b>	1 ounce	5-35 mg
<b>Baker's chocolate</b>	1 ounce	26 mg
<b>Chocolate syrup</b>	1 ounce	4 mg

Ask others in your house or office to decrease their caffeine with you. There is strength in numbers. Remember that coffee does not help you to sober up after drinking alcohol. Moderation is the key to caffeine intake. When your caffeine intake is not moderate, be prepared to experience jangly nerves and poor sleep patterns. Remember, caffeine's effects vary according to the individual - some people feel very little effect and some people feel frazzled by the smell of a coffee bean.

## Recipe of the Month

### Healthy Potato Salad

Makes 4 – 6 oz. servings

3/4 pounds small red potatoes  
 1/4 pound fresh asparagus spears  
 1/2 cup celery, chopped  
 1 tablespoon fresh chives, chopped  
 1 tablespoon fresh dill weed, chopped  
 2 tablespoons fat-free mayonnaise  
 1 tablespoon fat-free milk  
 1/8 teaspoon salt

Place potatoes in a large saucepan, add water to cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Drain, cover and chill. Snap off tough ends of asparagus and remove scales with a knife or vegetable peeler. Cut asparagus into 1 inch pieces and steam until crisp-tender (about 4-5 minutes in a vegetable steamer or 5 minutes in a plastic bag in the microwave).

Cut potatoes into 1/4 inch slices. Combine potato slices, asparagus, celery, chives and dill weed in a medium bowl. Combine mayonnaise, milk and salt in a small bowl and stir well. Add to vegetables and mix to coat well. Cover and chill.

Nutrients per serving: Calories: 85, Total fat: less than 1 gram, Saturated fat: less than 1 gram, Cholesterol: 0mg, Sodium: 191 mg, Carbohydrate: 20 grams, Protein: 3 grams, Dietary fiber: 3 grams

## **Unit of the Month**

### **MARSEC Guam**

This month it is my extreme pleasure to write an article about a Unit of the Month right here in District 14, MARSEC Guam. Though remote and far away (an 8 hour flight and across the International Dateline), UHPCs from several Guam units banded together to coordinate and create an “incentive driven” health promotion program for both non-exercisers and already exercisers alike. This on-going program attempts to promote voluntary participation in the fitness standards set by ALCOAST 329/04, to recognize the performance enhancements and new achievements in participating members, and to encourage all shipmates to train between assessment days in order to maintain fitness gains.

Fresh from finishing their UHPC class three months ago, POs Geri Cabrera, Carrie-Lee Grady, and Glenn Calairo rallied together and created a 6 month on-going program which included a Unit Wellness Instruction, a points driven workout tally system, training towards the annual Guam Perimeter Relay race, monthly All-Hands Health and Wellness presentations, and PWP (Personal Wellness Profile) implementation for participating members. The culmination of their efforts resulted in 2 Coast Guard Teams entering in the annual Guam Perimeter Relay Race.

Through a synchronized effort, both teams consisted of mixed personnel from different departments as well as other units. Team Coast Guard A/B consisted of 10 members each from the CGC Galveston Island, ESD Honolulu, Station Guam and Prevention and Compliance (MSO). Under the guidance of the UHPCs, each unit then performed and maintained a training schedule. Some trained together three times a week (MWF), while other units did 5K weekend races to train for speed. The team members were both runner and non-runner alike. According to PO Cabrera, “we had a few non-runners that only trained for a short while and were able to compete in their first race!

As of 4 May 2005, 25 personnel are now entered in the Fitness/Wellness award program. The MARSEC UHPCs were able to establish recognition awards such as the “Fitness Award” (targeting the biggest improvements in physical fitness and garnering 24hr liberty) and the “Wellness Award” (targeting the “biggest loser” of body fat/weight and garnering 72hr liberty). According to PO Cabrera, the “icing on the cake” is that every first Wednesday of the month, “we have a 30 minute All-Hands to present a topic of that month, i.e. May is “physical fitness month”, June is “safe summer month”. The picture below is a snap shot of one of the CG Perimeter Relay teams.



Special thanks to Jessica Dung, Health Promotion Manager at ISC Honolulu, for writing the Health Promotion Bulletin this month.



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